

Manufacturing Mid Wales

- Sam Saville
- Marc Welsh

- Aberystwyth University
- Global-Rural



Manufacturing Mid Wales

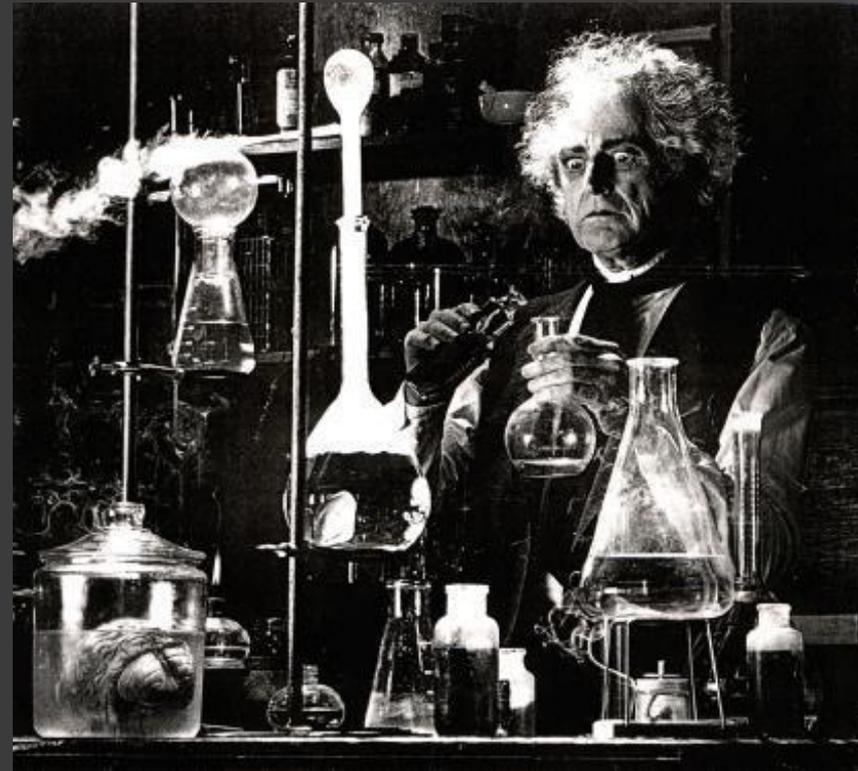
- **Urban-rural shift – Keeble et al**
 - **Spatial specificity**
- **Rural Regional Development**





Newtown the laboratory

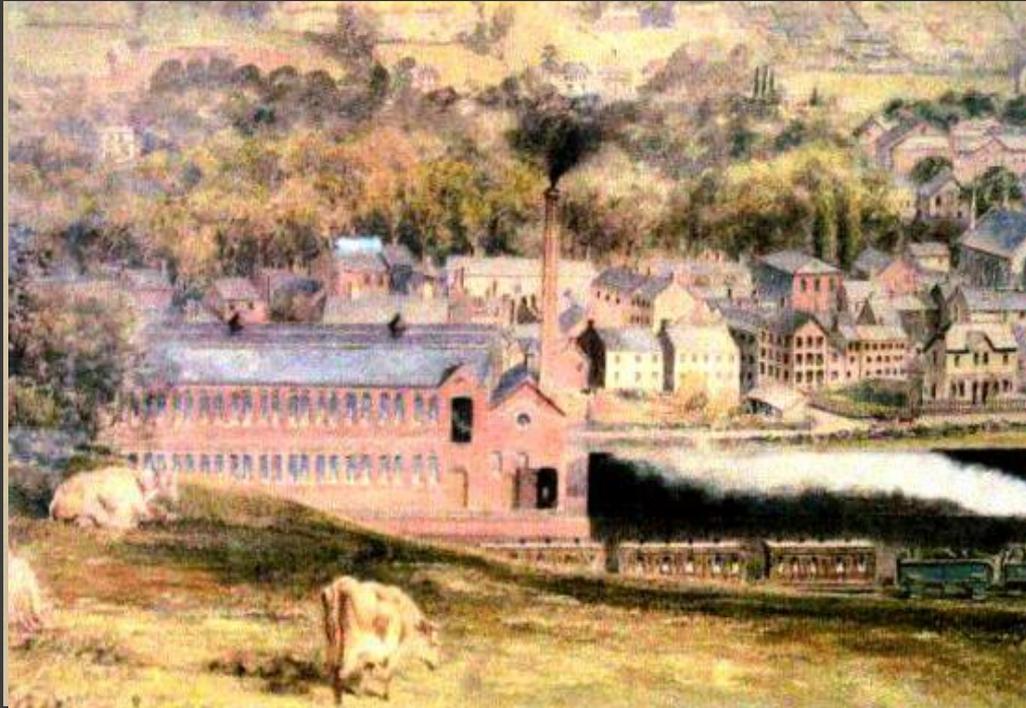
- Solving 'problem of mid-Wales'
- New Towns Act 1964
- Reflexive or recursive regions



“The scale of economic change, and the intensity of Welsh Office attempts to deal with its consequences, was dramatic. Wales acted as a laboratory for the development of regional economic policies aimed at achieving rapid impact”.

Goberman 2012 p.3

Sheep and Socialism



Newtown 1828

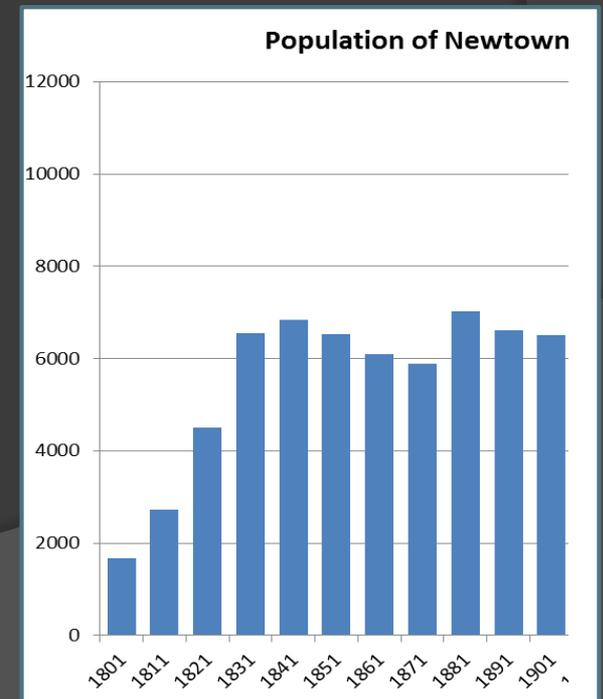
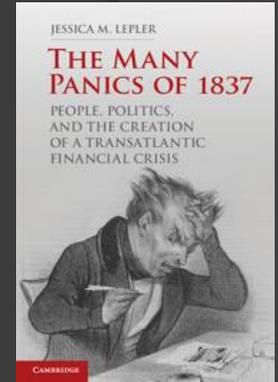


Robert Owen
1771-1858

reformer – utopian – cooperative – social(ist)

Rural manufacturing, globalisation and transformation

- Incorporation into international textile industry = vulnerable to disruption in the global economy
- Transatlantic financial crisis 1837 - hit Newtown mills
- Communications and industrial revolution – centrality of national and international markets
- Peak population of 7,000 people in 1881
- 1881 census - residents born in British Guiana, Canada, East Indies, France, Germany, Gibraltar, India, Ireland, Jamaica, Switzerland and the United States

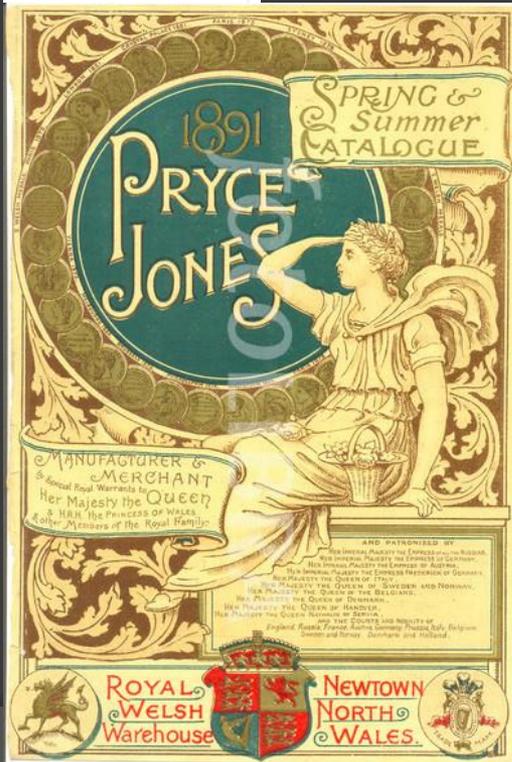


Global Newtown



Sir
Pryce
Pryce
Jones

- **The Royal Welsh Warehouse**
- 1861 - first mail order catalogue.
- 1876 - Euklisia Rug (sleeping bag) – 60,000 sold to Russian army
- Florence Nightingale / Queen Victoria
- 1880 > 100,000 customers world wide



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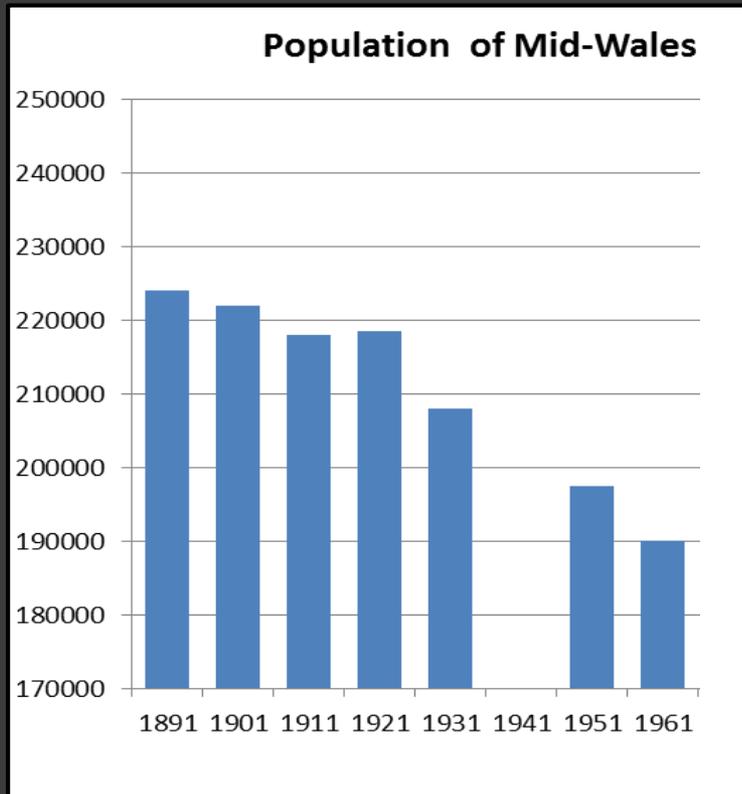
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Regional decline



For many years reference has been made to the “Mid Wales problem”. It is a problem which covers several different and complex issues but is perhaps best summed up, simply, in the word “depopulation”.

Development in Mid Wales. A review of the work of the Mid Wales Industrial Development Association 1959

The Problem of Mid Wales

- ⦿ Regional depopulation
- ⦿ Welsh Land Enquiry Commission 1914
- ⦿ Problematization of rural Wales
- ⦿ Rural depopulation > characteristic of industrial societies in the 20th century



Problematizing the problem

- ⦿ Post-war
 - Welsh Reconstruction Advisory Council 1944
 - Council of Wales 1953
 - Welsh Agricultural Land Commission 1955
- ⦿ Convergence and consensus within Wales that:
 - a) industry as solution to ‘problem of mid Wales’,
 - b) business would not relocate without facilities already in place – ‘advance factories’,
 - c) coordinating and financing body needed
- ⦿ National politics rejected move as undermining national economic planning

A 'Quick Fix': regional planning for rural industrial development

- ◎ MWIDA 1957
- ◎ English Midlands
 - Overspill
- ◎ development strategy
 - relocation / training / nucleation
- ◎ Planning boom – regional planning
 - 'Growth poles'



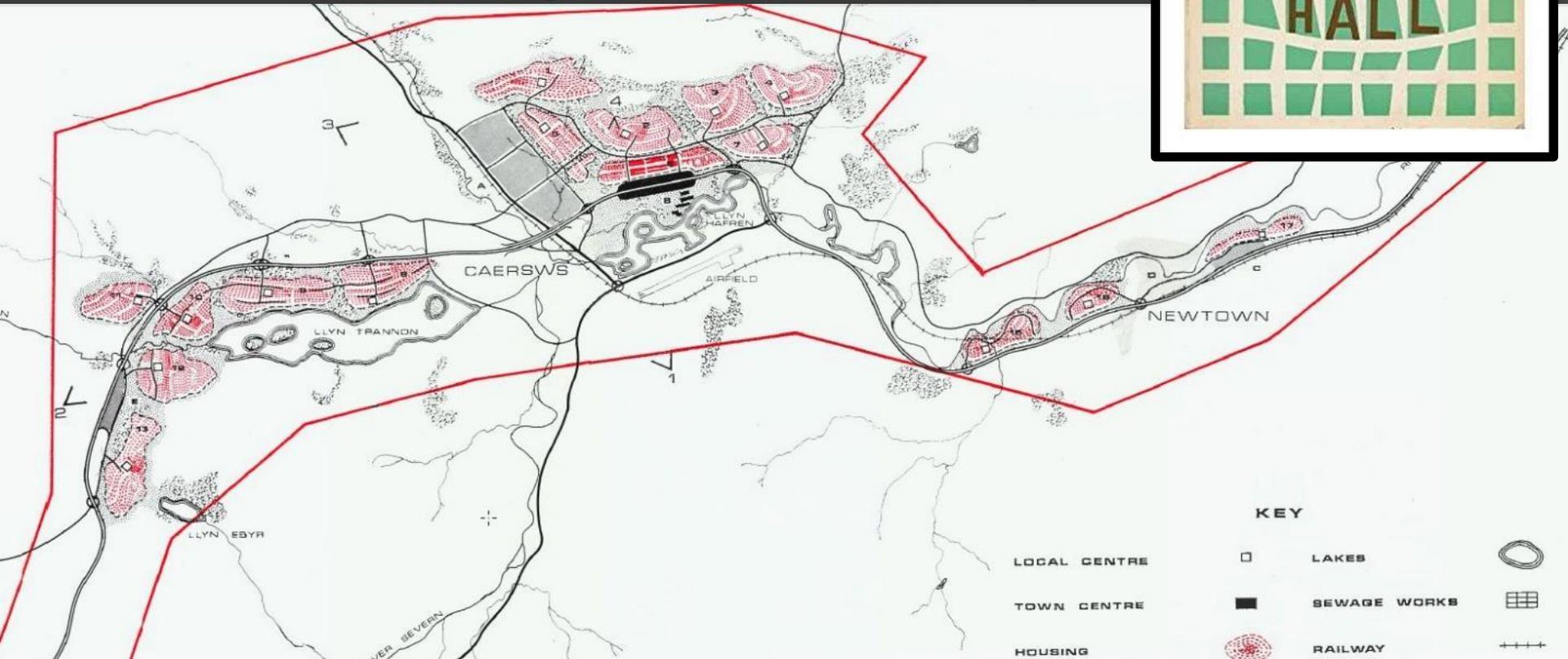
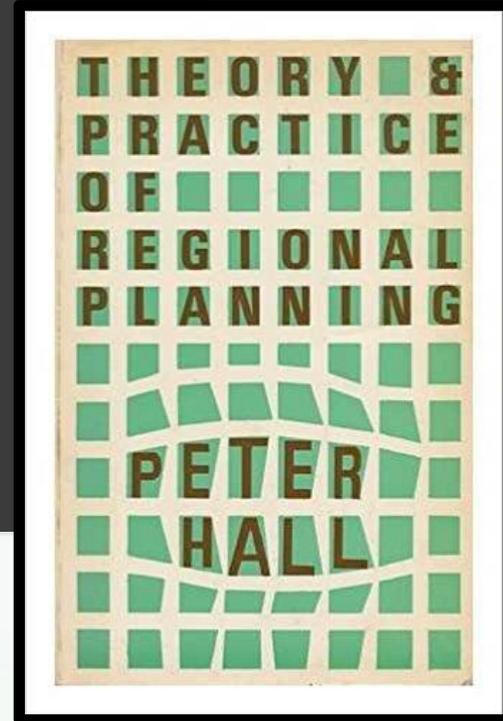
Beacham Committee 1964

“irrespective of the level of population, a policy of reducing the existing scatter by **nucleation** into larger and fewer settlements should be implemented. This would enable improved services and social amenities to be provided at a lower cost.”

TreOwen – Owen’s Town

- “My anxiety is to see that the first new town in Mid-Wales is so placed as to be able to attract industry and workers there, including some of the 100,000 Welshmen who left Wales to seek work in the Midlands conurbation. If this is done and is a success its influence will extend to other parts of Wales.”

[Jim Griffiths, Hansard 1965]



New Town Master Plan – 1968

new NEWTOWN
new HOMES new JOBS new TOWN



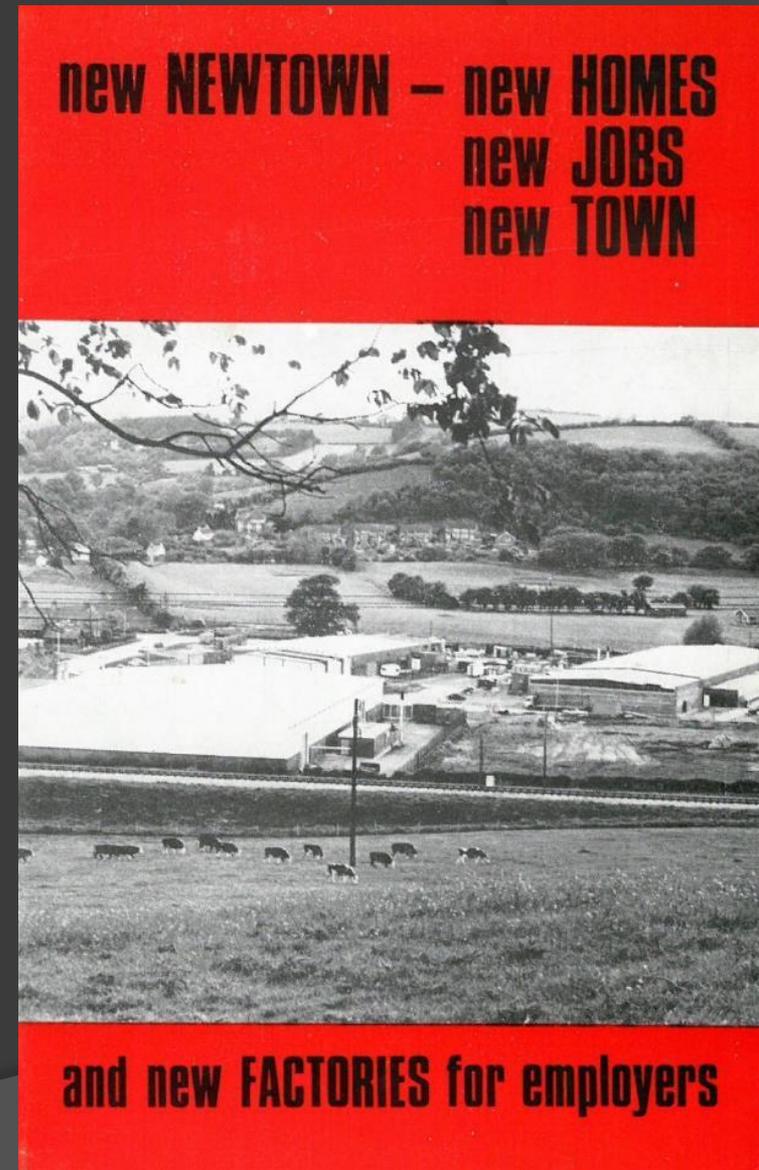
XHC

Emergent Consensus

- Mid-Wales Rural Region needs development agency
- 1971 – Welsh Council – Strategy for Rural Wales
- 1975 – Welsh Grand Committee
- 1976 – Development Board for Rural Wales established

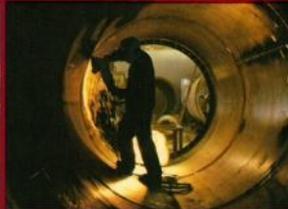
“After beginning its work, the Association soon found that the area’s industrial and general development were inextricably linked...At its most simple, factories needed people, people needed houses, houses needed services and so on”

D.P. Garbett-Edwards, Chief Exec, Mid Wales Development Corporation, 1972



Development strategies

Make it in Mid Wales



Development Board
for Rural Wales

“It was no good going for ...the new financial services kind of jobs. I mean, we were not going to attract them to Mid Wales... Manufacturing was kind of seen very much then as the poor relation of job creation, but I mean it was right for us. So we did go pretty big for manufacturing”.

Chair of DBRW 1990-1993

Attracting business

- Financial incentives:
 - Reduced rent
 - Capital equipment grants
 - Training grants
 - Subsidised building
- Attractive rural lifestyle
- Housing and community facilities
- Local workforce

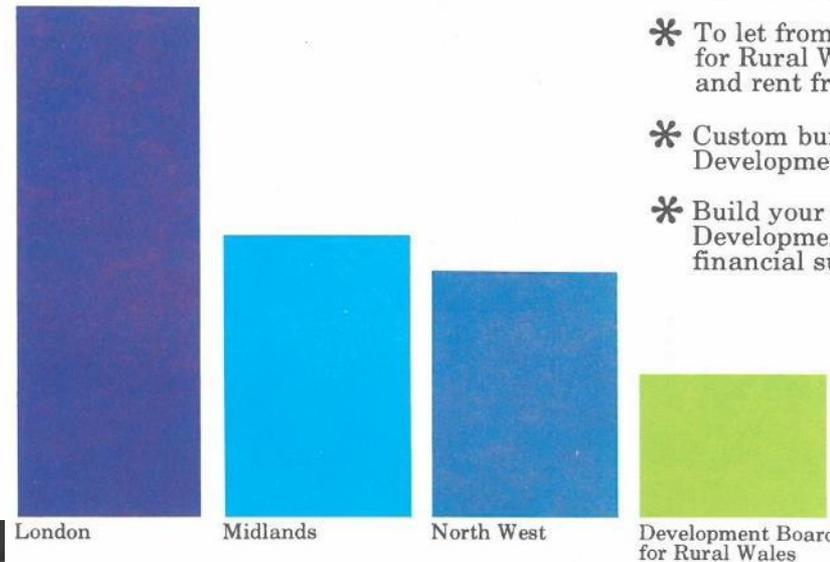
Tell us what you want



A modern 50,000 sq ft (4750 sq m) factory at Blaenau Ffestiniog - an attractive rental and possibly up to 5 years rent free.



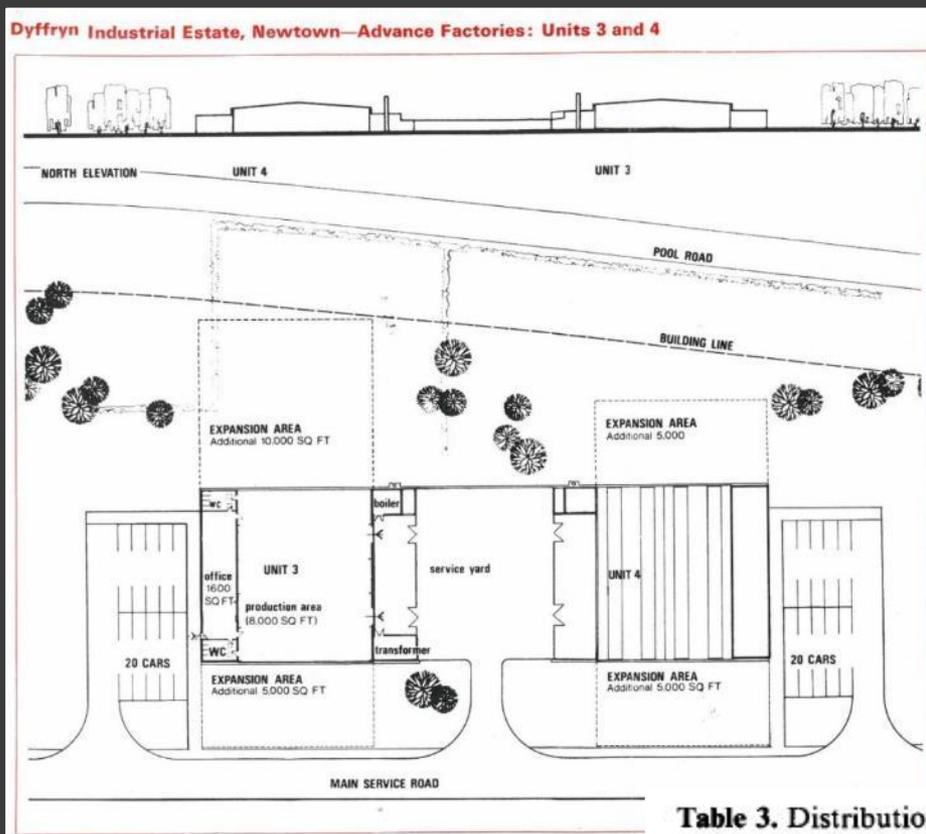
Rent comparisons



Factory space in Mid Wales

- * To let from the Development Board for Rural Wales at attractive rents and rent free periods.
- * Custom built for you by the Development Board for Rural Wales.
- * Build your own factory on a Development Board site with full financial support.

Attracting business



Mid Wales

- 4million sq feet of business space provided by DBRW – nearly 500 factories built.
- DBRW annual funding £11-30 million (at 2012 prices)

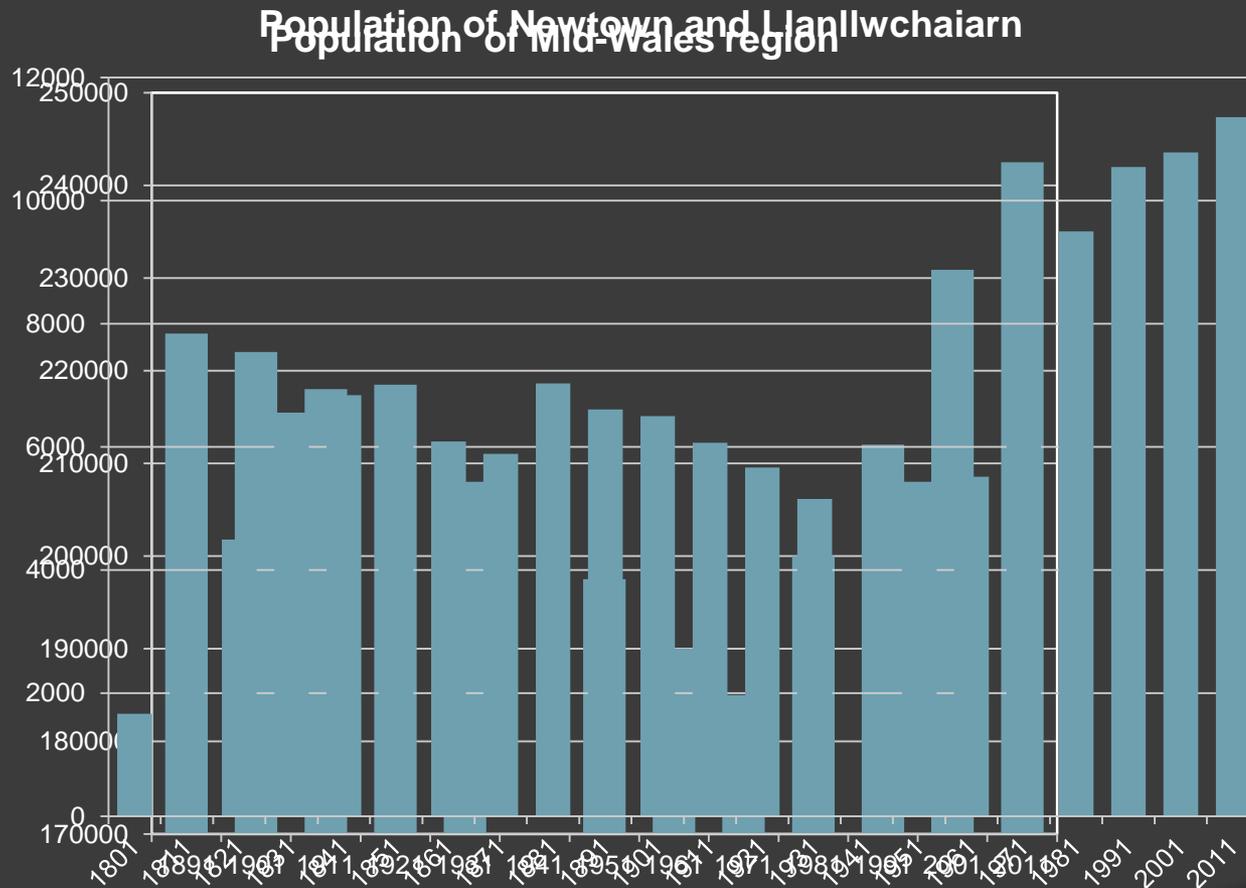
Day and Hedger 1990:
Bulk of funding in
Newtown and
Welshpool

Table 3. Distribution of MWD development activity by local authority district, 1977–88 (%)

District	Development activity				
	Factories	Factory space	Social projects	Grant aid	Population
Brecknock	13.2	21.0	11.7	17.7	20.0
Ceredigion	20.4	10.6	23.0	22.1	30.3
Merionydd	13.4	8.2	14.0	14.6	15.5
Montgomery	40.5	49.6	38.3	35.1	23.7
Radnor	12.6	10.6	13.0	10.5	10.5

Source: DBRW/MWD (1987/88).

Problem solved?

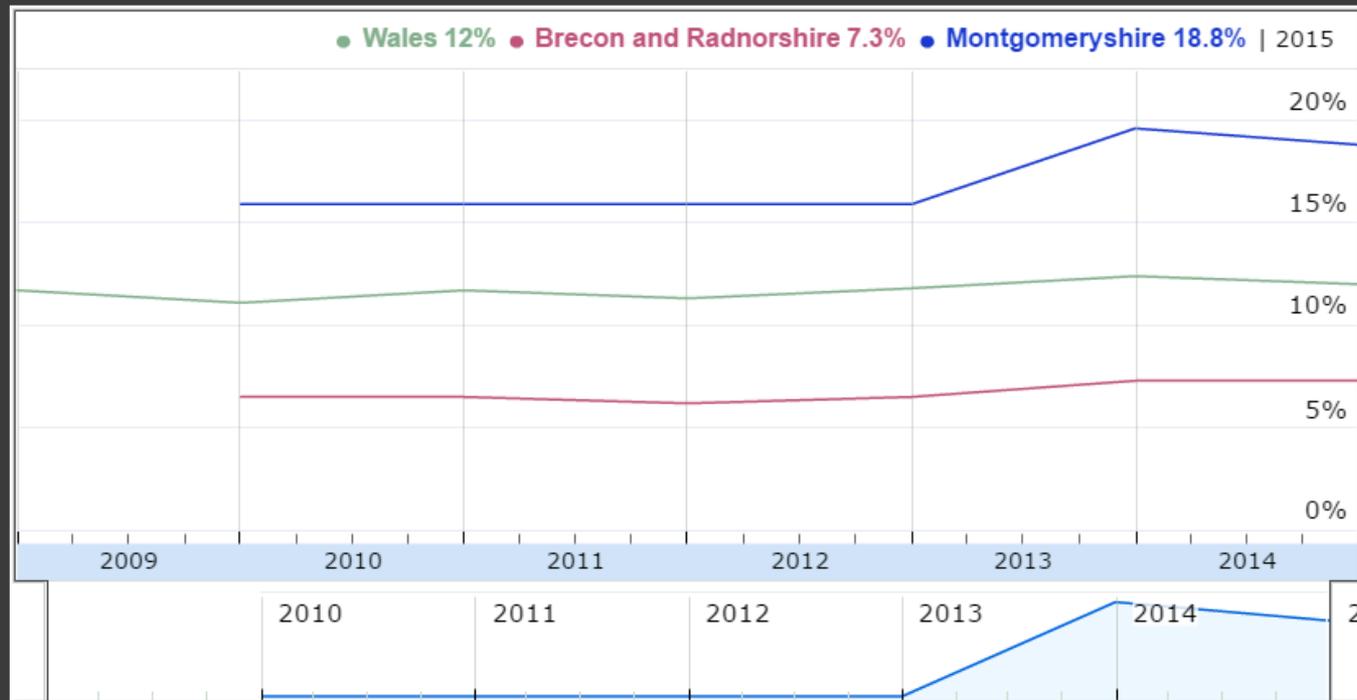


Counter-urbanisation – a complementary trend.

Newtown reached its target population... eventually

Manufacturing to the rescue

% of Workforce employed in manufacturing



- Montgomeryshire - heartland of manufacturing in Mid Wales – 4,500 people, nearly 19% of the workforce.
- Manufacturing share of UK GDP declined dramatically
1970 = 25% 1990 = 18% 2007 onwards = 10%
- Jobs declined – 1980 25% of all jobs – 2010 down to 8%

Laura Ashley

Control Techniques



- 5 Factories in Wales from 1960s.
- Newtown Factory 1984 – 500 jobs, growing to 2000
- Early 2000s - consolidation still 200-300 jobs in Newtown.

“Newtown has grown up through the funding but has remained here because it’s simply based here and the logistics and the people around here that know about this stuff”.

Control Techniques Interview

Crisis of Identity?

Newtown still has significant manufacturing activity but...

Fears

That it becomes a 'ghost town'

That the town centre dies

CHANGE IS BEING PREVENTED BY
THE OLDER GENERATION

The town will have a natural death

That it becomes forgotten

Town used as a depository for drug
problems, ex-convicts or other
vulnerable people



Worried about drugs coming into the town

We're going to be a dead town

That the bypass causes decline of town

That the next generation have to move away
as there are no career paths here

The ongoing 'brain drain'

That the window of opportunity
with the bypass will be lost

MORE EMPTY SHOPS

Will be an increase in anti-social behaviour

Teenage delinquency

Will be too many migrants

That no-one will interact with each other anymore

Things like post office and
banks will have gone, replaced
by pubs and charity shops

Build more housing estates
without the jobs to support them



Local businesses will struggle

People will become fearful of difference

That people's values will change
- less community minded, more
anti-social behaviour

**CONTINUE TO HAVE LONG
DISTANCES TO TRAVEL FOR
MEDICAL TREATMENT**

That social isolation
increases

Overdevelopment

Facilities and resources will be diverted to other towns e.g. Welshpool

What can we conclude?

- ⊙ Newtown/DBRW consequences
 - Innovator – ‘social development’
- ⊙ Ongoing critique:
 - Nucleation – spatial disparities
 - Top-down
 - Inward investment
- ⊙ Protecting rural services in era of austerity

Conclusions

- Institutions – cultural, economic, political, logistical
- Spatial theories – depopulation, nucleation, regional planning
- Key Actors – politicians, committees, councils, MWIDA, MWDC, DBRW, EU
- ‘Rural Wales’ – materiality, peripherality, functionality

- Interplay in place – complex, path dependent socio-economic landscape

- A manufacturing rural region?

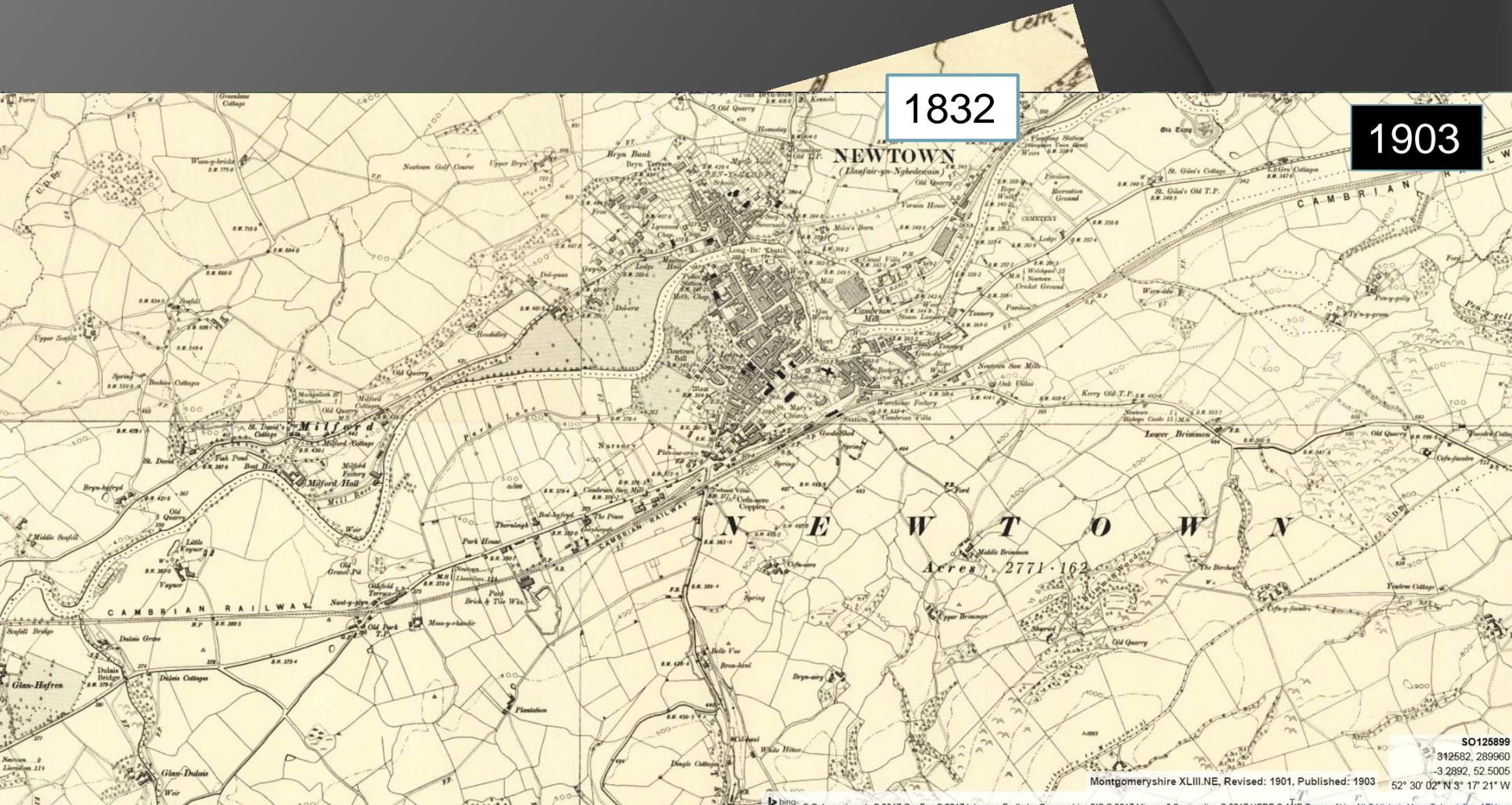
- ‘Problem of Mid Wales’



THANKS FOR YOUR ATTENTION

1832

1903

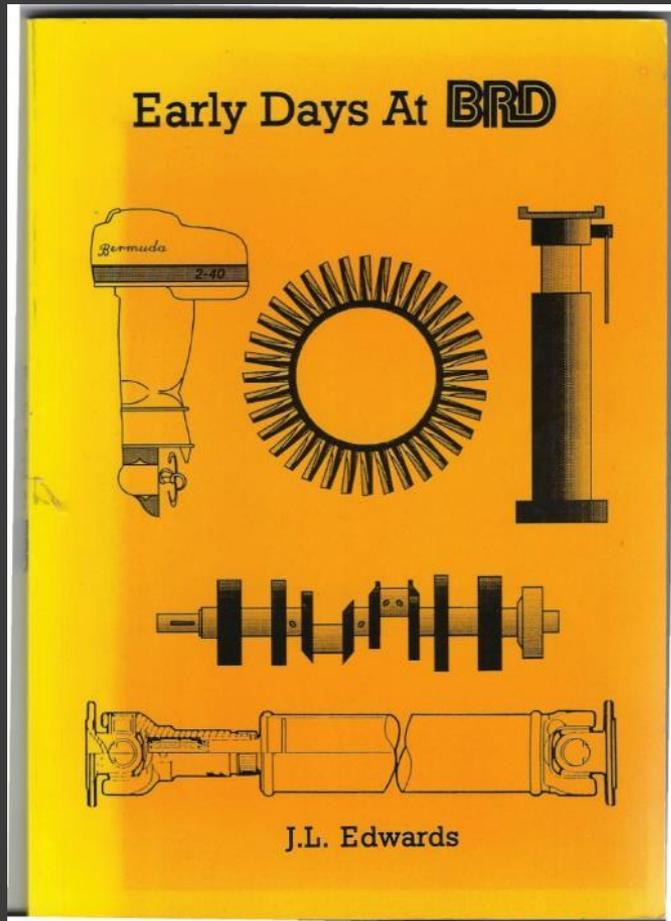


Montgomeryshire XLIII.NE, Revised: 1901, Published: 1903 52° 30' 02" N 3° 17' 21" W

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Vulnerability to global trends



BRD closure 1981 – 430 jobs lost, employed up to 1000 at it's peak.

1. Technology change – smaller cars with front wheel drives
2. Growth in imports into UK car market
3. Fall in exports due to foreign exchange rate
4. Recession

